

26 January 1985

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# Ex-agent says CIA roles are in conflict

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The CIA cannot have the reliable intelligence operation the country needs while it maintains covert operations that include efforts to overthrow governments, supporting assassinations and lying to the public, former agent Ralph W. McGehee said yesterday.

McGehee spoke to the Cleveland State University Model United Nations Conference, which ends Sunday.

In an interview before his speech, McGehee cited misadventures of the CIA in Vietnam, Central America and elsewhere as evidence of the inherent inability of a single agency to acquire information used to determine policy, and at the same time, help create policy and act to implement it.

Like several other agents who lost their idealism, McGehee quit the CIA in 1977 and wrote a book. Called "Deadly Deceits: My 25 Years in the CIA," it was published in 1983.

The disillusionment began in Vietnam, McGehee said. That is where he learned that intelligence assessments were revised to meet what was politically desired for policy. That is when, he said, he began protesting falsification of intelligence reports.

"It was not giving false body counts, but something similar," McGehee said. "We could not report how strong the other side was or lack of strength or backing for the South Vietnamese government."

At each level there were operation officers who would act as filters to delete information, McGehee said. McGehee, who was in Vietnam from 1968 to 1970, was chief of liaison to the South Vietnamese secret police.

He said if reports had accurately reflected available information, "our country would have backed out of the Vietnam War."

A former tackle on the University of Notre Dame football team, McGehee was recruited by the CIA in 1952 after he was cut from the Green Bay Packers professional team. He served the CIA in Japan, the Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand.

The CIA is believed to be conducting a covert operation against the Mexican government because it was not supporting U.S. policy in Central America, McGehee said.

The agency also is active in trying to overthrow the government of Nicaragua, has distributed a manual directing assassination activities, was involved in the El Salvador election and is involved in American military bases in Honduras, McGehee said.

Two other agents recently resigned in protest over Central American operations, McGehee said. They were David MacMichael and John Horton.

Covert operations, McGehee said, can include economic, political, psychological or paramilitary activities to achieve a goal such as destabilizing a country. Activities can include faking or forging materials that contribute to a government's overthrow, such as Indonesia's in 1965, McGehee said.

Such activities are counterproductive, usually immoral and illegal, destroy the argument of moral leadership of this country and work against gathering good intelligence, McGehee said. And, he pointed out, it usually results in the American public and Congress being lied to or misled.



PD/RICHARD KENDZIERSKI

**Ralph W. McGehee**  
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